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Stalin, Soviet Agriculture, and Collectivisation

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The collectivisation of Soviet agriculture in the 1930s may have been the most significant and traumatic of the many transformations to which the Communist regime subjected the people of the former Russian empire. Historical and other literatures have viewed this policy with considerable ambivalence. On the one hand, it involved considerable violence and the harsh policy of 'dekulakisation', provoked numerous peasant protests, disrupted the agricultural system, and was a factor in the great famine of 1931–33, though not the most important cause.[1] At the same time, collectivisation brought substantial modernisation to traditional agriculture in the Soviet Union, and laid the basis for relatively high food production and consumption by the 1970s and 1980s.[2]

This ambivalence regarding collective agriculture extends to the intentions of the Soviet regime in implementing collectivisation. In particular, Stalin's attitudes toward peasants and agriculture, given the growing authority and power he had by the late 1920s, are central issues for an understanding of the regime's decision to carry out this policy. Yet scholarly discussions of his views of agriculture and related issues (peasants, famines, agricultural development) are problematic. Few, if any studies, for example, discuss his early writings on peasants. Some works simply assume Stalin's hostility to peasants as the underlying explanation for the tragedies that struck them in the 1930s, as for example Robert Conquest's citation of Khrushchev that 'for Stalin, peasants were scum'.[3]

Aside from such extreme and inadequately supported positions, the historical literature displays several interpretations of Stalin's views of agrarian topics and his intentions behind the decision to collectivise agriculture. These interpretations range between two poles: exploitation, according to which Stalin's goal in collectivisation was to facilitate extraction of food and other resources from the villages; and

development, according to which Stalin's goal was to modernise agriculture to make it more productive. One can find the first view in a wide range of publications.[4] Alexander Erlich, for example, cites Stalin's speech at the July 1928 plenum, in which he referred to the need both to obtain 'tribute' ['dan'] from the peasants and also to modernise agriculture, and asserts that the second claim was essentially a political lie: 'To proclaim in so many words that collectivisation was needed in order to squeeze out the peasants in a most effective way would clearly be a poor tactic; it was much smarter to present the collective farm as an indispensable vehicle for modernising Soviet agriculture and for drastically increasing its productivity.'[5] Subscribers to these views hold that Stalin had simply adopted Preobrazhenskii's concept of 'primitive socialist accumulation'.[6] On this basis, one development economist wrote that 'historically, large-scale farming was not established in the USSR as a means of modernising agriculture, reducing costs of production, or improving the income of the peasants. The dominant motive was to overcome the difficulty of organising "procurement".'[7] I will refer to this interpretation as the 'exploitation argument.'

Other publications have questioned or suggested alternatives to this view of collectivisation. In the 1970s, James Millar and Michael Ellman challenged the exploitation argument, which Millar called 'the standard story', using calculations by the Soviet economist Barsov to argue that during the first five-year plan (1928–32) agriculture was a net recipient rather than donor of resources in the Soviet economy.[8] They saw this result, however, as the unexpected consequence of collectivisation and not the government's intention. E. H. Carr wrote in the 1960s that Soviet leaders hoped collectivisation, and the mechanisation of farming that it would allow, would increase productivity as well as marketing, but he thought that the problem during the grain crisis (the shortfall in urban food supplies from late 1927 onward) was primarily marketing rather than production. In 1980, Mark Harrison analysed the main scholarly views of why the Soviet regime 'abandoned NEP', and reached conclusions similar to Carr's. He restated the argument that the regime imposed collectivisation to increase the share of marketed grain and facilitate procurement, but he also argued that the grain crisis of 1928–29 could not have been eliminated by alternative policies, and that the resource needs of the first five-year plan exceeded the potential of NEP farming.[9] This interpretation implies that the Soviet leadership implemented collectivisation at least in part to increase production.

Moshe Lewin has argued that production as well as marketing of grain had declined relative to pre-war years and that the regime hoped

to remedy this with collectivisation, but he still thought that Soviet leaders placed a higher priority on marketing from the farms than on increased production and modernisation.[10] John Bergamini took a more development-oriented view by summarising, with some scepticism, Stalin's arguments that collectivisation would provide agriculture with a technical base comparable to industry and allow agriculture to develop like industry.[11] Isaac Deutscher argued that 'Stalin was precipitated into collectivisation by the chronic danger of famine in 1928 and 1929', which also implied a need to increase production[12] On the other hand, post-Soviet scholars have taken an extreme version of the exploitation argument, even though the new archival sources they used contradict that argument.

This chapter examines Stalin's views of agriculture under the categories of his attitudes toward peasants, agriculture, and collectivisation, based on his published works and certain archival sources, from his earliest publications to the 'Great Change' of 1929. It does not claim to be a complete examination of his views, but it presents evidence and analysis to show that the advocates of the 'exploitation argument' overlook, distort, and take so much of Stalin's writings and statements out of context that they misrepresent his views and the intentions that Stalin and his associates had in their agrarian policies and their decision to undertake collectivisation.

In light of the potentially controversial character of this topic, it might be helpful for the general reader to clarify one issue. This chapter is a study of the decision to undertake collectivisation; it is not a study of collectivisation itself or of the great famine of 1931–33. The literatures on collectivisation and especially on the famine are highly polarised, but most writings work from the assumptions of the 'exploitation argument' described above and try to extend that argument to explain the famine. Several scholars argue that since the harvests of 1931–32 were not small by official data, the famine was a genocide that Stalin imposed intentionally and specifically (or mostly) on Ukraine in order to suppress Ukrainian nationalist tendencies among the peasants and to suppress peasant resistance.[13] Thus they interpret the famine as a means by which the regime exercised its authority to facilitate exploitation of the peasants where the peasants were allegedly particularly resistant. On the basis of this view, certain 'intentionalist' or Ukrainian nationalist scholars move backwards and, in addition to making an extreme version of the exploitation argument, assert that the regime imposed collectivisation to suppress Ukrainian nationalism.[14]

Others, including myself, have shown that the famine was not limited to Ukraine, but affected virtually the entire Soviet Union, and resulted first of all from a series of natural disasters in 1931–32 that diminished harvests drastically and that were not reflected in official statistics or in the later intentionalist historiography. This new evidence invalidates the basic assumption of the intentionalist argument, that the 1931–32 harvests were not small enough to cause a famine on their own, and shows that the famine could not have been a genocide in the sense claimed by intentionalist scholars.[15] More important, the evidence for this interpretation of the famine demonstrates that the Soviet regime depended for its survival on the peasantry and relied on the peasants to overcome the famine, which they did by producing a much larger harvest in 1933, despite the tragic famine conditions in which they worked.[16] This evidence shows, in particular, that collectivisation allowed the mobilisation and distribution of resources, like tractors, seed aid, and food relief, to enable farmers to produce a large harvest during a serious famine, which was unprecedented in Russian history and almost so in Soviet history. By implication, therefore, this research shows that collectivisation, whatever its disruptive effects on agriculture, did in fact function as a means to modernise and aid Soviet agriculture.

Readers committed to an 'intentionalist' interpretation of the famine might respond by dismissing this research as an attempt to exonerate Stalin and the Soviet regime for the catastrophes that took place in these years. In line with the saying, 'to understand is not to condone', my aim, however, is to explain, not to defend. This chapter attempts to provide a more careful, contextual, and objective reading than previous studies of both familiar and new sources to show how Stalin and others developed the idea of collectivisation in the late 1920s in the first place. Instead of a heroic defence of collectivisation, this chapter arrives at an ironic story, that of intentions going very wrong.

If the evidence and arguments here attribute to Stalin the intention of improving agriculture with collectivisation and do not attribute to him a ruthless hatred of peasants, and Ukrainians in particular, this does not exonerate him from responsibility for many well-documented decisions during the process of collectivisation and the famine that could have alleviated conditions for many people.

Stalin and the peasants

Stalin's writings do not indicate that he considered peasants to be 'scum'. Instead, his writings through 1929 show understanding of, and support

for, the demands of at least the 'poor' and 'middle' peasants, but also an awareness of the peasants' place in the larger economy. In a series of articles on the 'agrarian question' in a Georgian radical newspaper in 1906, for example, Stalin discussed peasants' desires for land and urged them to confiscate it. He argued that despite the Social Democrats' party line, 'if the peasants' demands are genuine and democratic, the Party must help peasants so as not to be a brake on revolution'.[17] In April 1917 he defended peasants' appeals to the Provisional Government to be allowed to farm uncultivated lands on nobles' estates, agreeing with the peasants' warnings of disaster and food shortages, and criticising the government's efforts not to offend the landlords, 'even though Russia fall into the clutches of famine'.[18]

In October 1917 he published an article about starvation in villages and towns that is particularly interesting in light of events in the 1920s and 1930s.[19] He challenged 'bourgeois' press claims that peasants were 'rolling in wealth', cited investigations showing that peasants were starving and suffering from scurvy and other diseases of food scarcity, and quoted from a peasant's letter (which he calls 'eloquent') expressing fears that winter will leave no alternative to starvation. In particular, he criticised plans by the Kerenskii government to send punitive expeditions to the countryside to gather food because they would only worsen the situation. He then described starvation among factory workers, citing reports from several towns, and contrasting Russia's large exports before the revolution with its inability to feed its own workers. He analysed the whole situation as a vicious circle: the peasants obtained few industrial goods, and therefore sold little grain, which left the workers too hungry to produce more, which in turn led the peasants to sell even less, making urban conditions yet worse. Stalin saw the only solution in Russia's withdrawal from the 'predatory war'.

This description of the 1917 crisis seems to be an uncanny anticipation of the 1927–29 grain crisis, with urban and rural starvation, the goods famine, and requisitions. Stalin and other Soviet leaders recognised this similarity between the crisis of the revolutionary period and the grain crisis of 1928 and after. They came to see this situation as a fundamental weakness in the Soviet agricultural system and undertook collectivisation because they thought it would prevent the problem from recurring.

These items from Stalin's published works are only a sample of his writings from the pre-Soviet period, and at this point it is not possible to say how representative they are. Still, they do not show anything like hostility toward the peasants. For the Civil War period, Stalin's

works include what clearly are again only a small sample of his correspondence and other writings, yet again we do not find hostility toward peasants. The most relevant in his published works is an article on the German and Austrian occupation of Ukraine in accord with the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Here he describes Ukrainians as putting up fierce resistance to the Germans.[20] This again anticipates later events: coercive governmental demands, abusive officials, peasant protests, and conflict over extractions from the countryside. In these documents Stalin clearly viewed these events from the peasants' standpoint, and took their side. While he may not always have done this, these sources indicated that he did so in these cases, that he had the capacity, and most notably the willingness, to understand how peasants responded to coercive state policies.

During NEP, the 'peasant question' – in this case, which agrarian policy would be best for the transition to socialism – was of course a central issue in the debates of the time between the main Soviet leadership and the various 'oppositions', and Stalin even published a collection of his writings on the peasant question. In them Stalin again seeks to balance understanding of the peasants with an awareness of the peasants' place in the national economy. Stalin repeatedly argued that capitalist development would be a mistake for Soviet agriculture because it would inevitably lead to the polarisation of that sector into large latifundia and impoverished wage-slaves. Instead, Soviet agriculture had to develop through amalgamation of peasants into cooperatives.[21] He also thought that private trade would lead to an exploitation of the poorer peasants through prices and loans. Therefore the government should try to shift trade from the private sector to the state and cooperative sector.[22] In other words, he advocated socialist and state-centered policies because he thought they would help avoid exploitation of the peasants by large landowners and moneylenders under a capitalist economy.

He also tried to understand peasants' objectives. At a Central Committee (TsK) plenum in October 1924, during the 1924–25 famine, he argued that peasants had changed since the revolution. They were no longer the downtrodden masses, now they were a new, free, and active class. The issues that concerned them were also new, no longer the landlords or the requisitions of the Civil War; now peasants wanted high selling prices for their grain and low prices for the commodities they wanted to buy. He even identified these price issues as a key factor in peasant rebellions during the brief Georgian uprising of 1924.[23] To win over their support Stalin proposed involving peasants more actively in the elections for, and activities of, the local soviets; he also identified

food relief during the famine as an important factor encouraging peasants' support.

During NEP Stalin repeatedly emphasised that local officials learn to get on good terms with the peasants, not just look to Moscow. He warned that renewed uprisings on the scale of Kronshtadt and Tambov were still possible if Soviet officials acted unresponsively toward the peasants.[24] He identified the peasantry as the Soviet government's main ally, since the foreign proletariat and the colonies had so far shown no sign of following the Bolsheviks in creating a revolution. He wrote that they were an uncertain ally, because they had 'vacillated' under the influence of Denikin and Kolchak (the two main leaders of the Whites during the Civil War), but he did not blame them for that, instead attributing it to their ignorance, and insisted that the party and regime work to inform the peasants and make them more reliable allies.[25]

In these sources, Stalin shows the same sort of basic understanding of peasants' attitudes that he did in his writings from 1917 and before. His understanding is somewhat oversimplified and incomplete – Stalin was not Chaianov – but he got to the point and for many, perhaps most, peasants he was not wrong. I have not found any pejorative statements by Stalin about peasants in general, certainly nothing like Khrushchev's comment cited above.

Stalin's attitudes toward the peasants in these NEP sources, as earlier, were basically positive: he saw them as a new peasantry, free from the landlords, and with demands reflecting economic improvement, but also as a potential threat if regime officials ignored them. The main potential threat posed by the peasants, in Stalin's view, came from the small subgroup of kulaks. Stalin's limited and distorted Marxist education, of course, prevented him from having any doubt that such a group existed and acted as a 'class', with clearly defined interests and political views opposed to the Soviet government.[26] He shared this view, however, with many Communist Party members and others.[27]

During the grain crisis of 1927–29, Stalin, like most other Soviet officials, increasingly turned against the 'kulaks', assuming that they withheld marketable grain from exchange and that they represented a political threat because of their standing in the villages. The leaders, however, still considered the kulaks necessary for the economy. Kalinin expressed the Politburo's views at the July 1928 plenum, in a digression to which Stalin made no protest, that the party opposed the exile of kulaks so long as their grain production could not be replaced.[28] When the accelerating collectivisation in late 1929 indicated to the leadership that kolkhoz production could surpass the share of grain that the kulaks

produced, they then decided to unleash the anti-kulak attitudes and change policy to 'liquidation of the kulaks as a class'.[29]

Stalin and other leaders, however, repeatedly stated that most of the rest of the peasants supported dekulakisation, that it was a policy that reflected the interests of the poor and most middle peasants, whom the kulaks (according to Stalin) exploited. Stalin's hostility to the kulaks, then, did not in his mind correspond to hostility to the peasantry as a whole. Stalin also saw the kulaks as political leaders in the village, who could persuade peasants to turn against the Soviet government and withhold their grain reserves from sale in an attempt to weaken it. In other words, his attitude towards them derived from his view of the kulaks' place and function in the NEP economy and their attitude towards the regime. These types of considerations also affected his views of the peasants as a whole. To explain how Stalin viewed the peasants' place in NEP, we have to consider his views of agriculture.

Stalin and agriculture

While Stalin clearly could understand peasants' viewpoints, he also developed over this period a broader conception of the condition and place of agriculture in the Soviet economy. This conception did not see agriculture exclusively as a resource, as a means to development, but as a part of the development process.

The most important context for examining Stalin's views of agriculture was the character and condition of Soviet agriculture itself. Stalin recognised the diversity and complexity of the different agrarian systems that made up the rural Soviet Union and attempted to accommodate them in writing the Soviet constitution. Stalin's draft of a Soviet constitution in 1921–22 contained a three-tiered hierarchy of commissariats, which became part of the 1922 USSR constitution. This system left the agriculture commissariats as republic rather than national commissariats because agriculture involved specific customs and land-use patterns that varied by republic. The agriculture commissariats, like five others in Stalin's view, had to be 'independent commissariats' to ensure 'freedom of national development' for different nationalities.[30]

Stalin also recognised, like many others, the weakness and backwardness of Soviet agriculture. Few of the numerous studies of NEP peasant agriculture discuss famines, yet the country endured a series of famines in this period. The threat of famine underlay both officials' interpretations of the country's agricultural problems and the solutions they chose. By the beginning of NEP the country had endured two famines

since 1914: a primarily urban famine during the last years of the First World War and the Civil War, and the severe famine of 1921–23, during which the regime imported food and allowed the American Relief Agency to aid famine victims.[31]

Stalin's response to the 1924–25 famine, caused by drought and crop failure in the Volga basin, the southeast, and Ukraine, provides insight into his views of agriculture and famine.[32] In July 1924, Stalin published a directive to all party organisations on the struggle with the crop failure.[33] He outlined the extent of the crisis and the regime's measures to deal with the results of the drought – famine, disruption of peasant farms, reduced sowings – and to deal with drought itself – to protect peasants from drought in the future, and stabilise and improve agriculture. Measures in the first category included nearly 60 million rubles in food, seed, credits, and tax reductions, and as Stalin later admitted some 83 million gold rubles to purchase grain abroad.[34] Measures in the second area included a three-year land reclamation programme at a cost of 80 million rubles. In addition, however, Stalin emphasised the need to involve peasants in the struggle against the famine, to make sure that these measures would not remain on paper, and to dispel rumours and panic spread by 'enemies' (kulaks, etc.).[35]

In this directive Stalin understood the causes of the famine to be not only the natural disaster but also the weaknesses and instability of Soviet agriculture. The measures he described aimed not only to help peasants survive, maintain their animals and sowings, and restore hope and willingness to work, but also to help strengthen and protect the sector against future droughts. In other words it combined short-term relief and long-term agricultural development aid. Stalin agreed with most, if not all, of the party leadership. In his book on the famine, for example, Rykov blamed it first of all on what he termed the 'Asiatic' backwardness of traditional peasant farming, and included a series of articles on all the varied measures the regime had undertaken to restore and improve peasant farming.[36] Stalin and his associates interpreted the vulnerability of the Soviet Union to natural disasters as backwardness, as a problem that could be solved by modernisation. At this point Stalin still thought that Soviet peasant agriculture had potential for growth and improvement. In December 1925 he told the fourteenth party congress that agriculture could still make progress, asserting that even simple measures like clean seed could bring an improvement of 10–15 per cent.[37]

Stalin's experience in dealing with this famine, and his attribution of it to backwardness, were among the considerations that led him to see agriculture not simply, or even primarily, as a resource. In an important

speech in April 1926, Stalin distinguished two phases in the development of NEP: an initial phase during which the government had focused on agriculture, and the current phase which emphasised industry.[38] He explained that during the first years of NEP, the country had to focus on agriculture because the rest of the economy depended on it: industry needed food, raw materials, and markets. Now (in 1926) that agriculture had substantially recovered, he argued, the country had to focus on industry to lay a foundation for socialism. He emphasised, however, that even agricultural progress depended on industrial development, for tractors, machines, and other manufactured goods. Even in this speech on industry, Stalin did not see agriculture as subordinate and as purely a resource to be exploited. Agriculture, in his view, was more basic than industry to the economy and would be one of the prime beneficiaries of industrial development.

A year earlier, when the Dneprostroi project was under consideration, Stalin opposed it because he thought building factories to produce agricultural equipment was a higher priority: 'We need, furthermore, to expand our agricultural machinery factories, because we are still forced to purchase abroad the most elementary agricultural tools for tens of millions of rubles. We need, then, to build at least one tractor manufacturing plant, a new and large factory, because without one or more such factories, we cannot develop further.'[39] And when he wrote this, in July 1925, the Soviet Union was recovering from the famine that began the previous year. Clearly, he thought that farm machinery factories were the way to deal with vulnerability to natural disaster. In light of this evidence, it is problematic to argue, as Erlich did in relation to the grain crisis, that Stalin's assertion of the need to develop agriculture in this 1925 letter was a lie concealing a hidden desire to crush and exploit the peasantry. Lewin also argued that Stalin and the rest of the Soviet leadership did not envisage collectivisation and dekulakisation until mid-1929 at the earliest, and certainly not in 1925.[40]

In his April 1926 speech Stalin went on to discuss the nature and requirements of Soviet industrial development. He emphasised that Soviet development had to proceed without compromising Soviet independence, that the Soviet Union could not become an appendage of an imperialist power like India in relation to Britain. In order to avoid this, the country had to find internal sources of accumulation to cover the costs of industrialisation. He argued that the Soviet Union had such sources, and he listed them. Remarkably given the claims in the existing literature, agriculture itself was not on his list, which emphasised the annulment of tsarist debts and the nationalisation of industry and

banks. He did emphasise, however, that in order to secure Soviet accumulation the country needed a certain amount of food reserves, which he argued would not only support a favourable balance of trade but also to respond to crop failure or another such calamity.[41]

Stalin thus recognised that agriculture and industry were linked, mutually dependent. He certainly acknowledged the industrial sector's need for raw materials, food, and labour, which one would expect from the exploitation argument. He also emphasised, however, that agriculture needed crucial and growing amounts of inputs from industry. Otherwise it would not be able to develop and would hold back industrial development itself. In other words he perceived here a potential vicious circle similar to the one he saw in 1917.

'Tribute'

This conception of industry and agriculture as linked and mutually dependent is evident even in Stalin's much-cited remark about the peasants having to pay 'tribute'. Soviet leaders had discussed the topic for years, certainly even before Preobrazhenskii came up with this theory of 'primitive socialist accumulation'. As Millar has argued, Preobrazhenskii's theory was in fact little more than a description of NEP.[42] A more detailed and complete analysis of Stalin's statements on this point suggests a somewhat different interpretation from that of the exploitation argument. At the July 1928 TsK plenum, Stalin discussed the country's need to rely on internal resources for industry, identifying both workers and peasants as contributors, and explained agriculture's contribution in the following way:

> With the peasantry the situation in the given case stands as follows: they pay the state not only the usual taxes, direct and indirect, but they also overpay in relatively high prices for industrial goods – first of all, and they under-receive in prices for agricultural produce – second. This is an additional tax on the peasants in the interests of raising industry, serving the whole country, including the peasantry. This is something like 'tribute', something like a supertax, which we are forced to take temporarily, to preserve and develop further the present tempo of development of industry, to provide for industry for the whole country, to raise further the welfare of the village and then destroy completely this additional tax, these 'scissors' between town and village. This business, so to speak, is unpleasant [nepriiatnoe]. But we would not be Bolsheviks, if we were to paint over the fact and

close our eyes to it, that, unfortunately, our industry and our country for the time being cannot manage without this additional tax on the peasantry.[43]

Later in the same plenum, in response to criticisms by Osinskii and Tomskii, Stalin returned to this issue. After repeating the above argument, he added:

> Of course, the words 'supertax', 'something like tribute' – are unpleasant words, for they hit you in the nose. But first, the issue is not in words. Second, the words fully correspond to reality. Third, they, these unpleasant words, are precisely intended to hit the nose and induce Bolsheviks to undertake work in a serious way to liquidate this 'supertax', to liquidate the scissors. But how is it possible to liquidate these unpleasant things? By means of systematic rationalisation of our industry and reducing prices for industrial goods. By means of systematic improvement of the technology and yields of agriculture and gradually reducing costs of agricultural produce. By means of systematic rationalising of our trade and procurement apparatus. And so on and so forth. You will not be able to do all of this, of course, in one – two years. But we should definitely in the course of a series of years, if we want to free ourselves from all types of unpleasant things and phenomena that hit us in the nose.[44]

Stalin used the term 'tribute' as one of several terms to get across the idea of the policy the government was following. Stalin also clearly and repeatedly stated that the policy is disagreeable but inevitable, and that the Soviet regime should and was making efforts to eliminate the need for the policy of taxing agriculture heavily. He also stressed that a primary reason for the supertax was to benefit agriculture via industrial development. These are not the statements of a leader who sought to 'crush' and brutally exploit the peasantry. Nonetheless, Bukharin is known in the literature for having criticised Stalin on this point, for calling Stalin's policies 'military-feudal exploitation of the peasantry', which implies that Bukharin opposed this policy. On 9 February 1929 Bukharin, Rykov, and Tomskii presented an appeal to the Politburo in which Bukharin sharply criticised Stalin, among other things, for his use of the term 'tribute'. They wrote the following:

> The error of comrade Stalin, like the error of Comrade Preobrazhenskii, absolutely does not consist in the naked assertion that the peasantry 'overpays' (this possibly will still be for a long time, although we should strain all efforts toward the rapid liquidation of such a situation, according to the direct instructions of Lenin). This error consists in the incorrect, anti-Leninist, anti-Marxist characterisation of the social relations of the proletariat and peasantry, which leads inevitably to the practice of excessive taxation, undermining the basis of the union of the workers and peasants. Tribute is a category of an exploitative economy. If the peasant pays tribute, that means he is a tributary, exploited and oppressed, it means that from the government's viewpoint, he is not a citizen but a subject. Is it possible to identify the participation of the peasantry in the construction of industry as tribute? It is senseless, illiterate and politically dangerous...[45]

Bukharin did not reject the policy that Stalin described, but only Stalin's use of the term 'tribute', which he argued reflected an exploitative attitude toward the peasantry (a point he made at the November 1928 TsK plenum) and which he warned could lead to 'excessive overtaxation'.[46] In response to this point at the Politburo session held the same day, Stalin pointed out that Bukharin and his associates did not reject the policy, but were uncomfortable with the word 'tribute'. Stalin proceeded to cite numerous quotations from Lenin in which he used the term repeatedly to refer to government economic relations with the working class. Stalin asked the Politburo, if Lenin could use this term for workers, why could it not be used in a figurative sense for peasants, as 'something like tribute', along with all the other terms in use, like scissors, supertax, or additional tax? At the same time, Stalin recognised that Bukharin's criticism reflected his distaste for and (in Stalin's view) his inability to understand the regime's policy. Stalin said, '[The policies] are not understandable to him and it seems to him, that we are exploiting the peasants.' Stalin compared Bukharin's criticisms to those of Miliukov before the revolution.[47]

Of course, the dispute between the Stalin group and the Right opposition cannot be reduced to this issue. My aim here is to show that Bukharin's attack on Stalin about 'tribute', which has found its way into many scholarly works, did not reflect a difference over policy. The claims in the exploitation argument, therefore – that Stalin's reference to 'something like tribute' reflected only Stalin's viewpoint, that it represented a change in policy from NEP, and that his shift to this allegedly new policy was part of his decision to collectivise agriculture – are all incorrect. The policy of extracting 'something like tribute' in the form

of unequal prices was the NEP policy, not a new policy in 1928, and was already in effect before the regime began planning collectivisation. Collectivisation involved not the reinforcement or even perpetuation of this policy, but rather the policy goal of its reversal.

Stalin and collectivisation

The Soviet leadership's decision to collectivise agriculture had many roots, including the dreams of the Russian Populists and the convictions of Marx, Engels, and Lenin regarding the superiority of collective labour. The most immediate considerations, however, were, on the one hand, the slow growth of Soviet peasant agriculture and, on the other, the prospect that collective and state farms could allow modern mechanised farming based on the US model. Studies of kolkhozy conducted in the mid-1920s provided clear evidence of their higher productivity, and stimulated party and state decisions allocating resources to them and establishing new government administrative agencies to aid kolkhozy in 1925–27.[48] By the fifteenth Party Congress, the party resolved to set collectivisation as the new first-priority goal. In his speech to the Congress, Stalin contrasted the Soviet Union's rapid industrial growth and the slow development of agriculture with more rapid agricultural growth in the United States.[49] He attributed the USSR's agricultural problems to Soviet agriculture's technical backwardness, low cultural level, and the scattered, fragmented pattern of cultivation in the villages. He argued that the solution was not to slow industrial development in the Soviet Union, but to consolidate Soviet peasant farms into larger units farmed in common on the basis of new technology. He stated that this transformation be accomplished not by pressure, but by the persuasive power of mechanisation and scientific agriculture. However, he asserted that all the government's previous work in the countryside served only as a preparation for a shift to collective cultivation.

Stalin's statement at the Congress indicated a change in his views, like that of other Soviet leaders under the influence of the new information about the collective farms and the new measures the regime had initiated to support them. Stalin's statements during the grain crisis that followed the fifteenth Party Congress, however, indicated a much stronger commitment to collectivisation. According to the exploitation argument, the grain crisis triggered Stalin's decision to undertake collectivisation by coercive means because the collectives promised to facilitate grain procurement, but his statements on this point during his procurement-oriented trip to Siberia were not limited to that argument.

In his reproaches to Siberian officials, he blamed the procurement difficulties first of all on officials' mismanagement of the procurement campaign, which allowed the kulaks to 'disorganise the market' by raising grain prices.[50] He argued that such 'sabotage' would recur as long as there were kulaks, and he saw collective and state farms as the necessary means to obtain regular procurements because they produced large marketable surpluses. He went beyond this immediate concern for grain procurements, however, to argue for broader collectivisation as a basis of development:

> The expansion of collective and state farms to relegate kulaks to the background is not all. Our country cannot live with an eye only to today's needs. We must also give thought to the future, to the prospects for the development of our agriculture and, lastly, to the fate of socialism in our country. The grain problem is part of the agricultural problem, and the agricultural problem is an integral part of the problem of building socialism in our country. The partial collectivisation of agriculture of which I have just spoken will be sufficient to keep the working class and the Red Army more or less tolerably supplied with grain, but it will be altogether insufficient for: a) providing a firm basis for a fully adequate supply of food to the whole country while ensuring the necessary food reserves in the hands of the state, and b) securing the victory of socialist construction in the countryside, in agriculture.... Hence, for the consolidation of the Soviet system and for the victory of socialist construction in our country, the socialisation of industry alone is quite insufficient. What is required for that is to pass from the socialisation of industry to the socialisation of the whole of agriculture.... We must realise that we can no longer make progress on the basis of small individual peasant farms, that what we need in agriculture is large farms capable of employing machines and producing the maximum marketable surpluses.[51]

Stalin, then, interpreted the grain crisis not simply or even mainly as a problem of officials' incompetence in dealing with peasants to purchase grain or 'kulak' machinations in concealing it and deceiving procurement agents. In his view, the crisis was indicative of the larger and more fundamental problem of the backwardness and low productivity of traditional peasant agriculture. This is, of course, an issue of debate even in the recent literature, as evident in the work of Harrison, Lewin, and other more recent scholars. In discussing this statement, Lewin,

for example, asserts that Stalin 'felt' he had to offer local officials some long-term policy, which seems to dismiss Stalin's statement as a rationalisation.[52] Such an interpretation not only requires us to believe that Lewin somehow was privy to Stalin's emotions, but also requires us to believe that Stalin in early 1928 needed to ingratiate himself with the same officials whom he was upbraiding for their insufficiently effective procurement work. Yet if we consider Stalin's statement in January 1928 in the context of his experiences in dealing with similar crises, and his statements about them, during 1917, the Civil War, the 1921 famine, and the 1924 famine, his viewpoint was a logical and defensible position and consistent with views he and his associates had expressed for years. By January 1928, Stalin had witnessed three substantial famine crises that had affected millions of people, two of which had lasted for years and caused significant mortality. Low productivity of peasant farming, and its extreme vulnerability to natural disasters had played an important role in all of these crises.

The grain crisis and agricultural productivity

According to the exploitation argument, the grain crisis was not primarily a problem of production but of prices and planning. Most studies admit that the 1927 harvest was slightly smaller than that of 1926, but the latter was so large that a slight decline could not have caused the crisis. Instead, state procurement agencies' decisions to retain low grain prices relative to those of other farm produce, insufficient and unduly low-priced consumer goods, and fears of an impending war derived from statements by Stalin and others, all combined to persuade peasants to withhold or 'hoard' their grain stocks rather than sell, creating shortages in the towns.[53]

In fact, this interpretation underplays the significance of a decrease in production and shortages in the crisis, and leads to a misleading explanation of the decision to undertake collectivisation. First, the harvest data on which all of these arguments rely are more than uncertain: they are not even harvest data.[54] The overall 'harvest' statistics for the 1920s, which were matters of considerable dispute, derived (with few exceptions) from qualitative projections gathered by statistical officials from a sample of peasants before they completed their harvest work. Officials asked peasants to evaluate their harvests on a scale of one to five and then processed this 'data' to derive a percentage of an average, which they then multiplied by a figure they considered to be a pre-revolutionary average harvest. They would also routinely raise

their estimates slightly because they thought that the peasants understated their production to reduce their taxes. At a national meeting in 1929, however, statisticians decided that the pre-revolutionary reference number for an average harvest was in fact invalid, thus discrediting all of their previous estimates. Consequently, we do not know how much grain Soviet peasants actually produced. The official estimates probably overestimate the total.

One of the most detailed studies of any harvest, Welker's detailed study of the 1927 harvest using the (probably inflated) official data, concludes that the crop failure and harvest decline was not a minor factor but reduced peasants' reserves to subsistence levels or less. Welker argues, on the basis of a careful study of peasants' grain utilisation and available data on production in several regions of the Soviet Union, that they were not holding back surpluses to get higher prices in 1927, but were retaining what was essentially the bare minimum necessary for survival.[55]

Several Soviet leaders also saw the crisis as the result of shortage rather than, or more than, prices. According to documents found by Reiman, at the end of January 1928 the head of VSNKh, V. V. Kuibyshev, reported to the Politburo that the situation was disastrous and the country could not get out of it on its own resources. This viewpoint found support in a Sovnarkom resolution of February, which urgently ordered Soviet diplomats to gather all relevant information on the country's international standing in order to determine the possibility of obtaining foreign aid even at the cost of concessions.[56] Ultimately the Soviet Union did import food in 1928. Rykov explained at the November 1928 plenum that this was necessary to cover the gap between the old and new harvests, because production of food grains in 1928 was some 3.5 million tons less than in 1927, which again is an acknowledgement of a shortage.[57] The most explicit rejection of this 'hoarding' conception came from Mikhail Kalinin at the July 1928 Central Committee plenum, in his discussion of Stalin's proposal to build state farms:

> Will anyone, even one person, say that there is enough grain? . . . All these conversations, that the kulak concealed grain, that there is grain, but he does not give it up – these are conversations, only conversations, because *we know how* to take grain from the kulak. To teach Kaganovich or Chubar' how to take grain – absurd. *They know how* to take. . . . We need to pose the question directly: if the kulak had a lot of grain, we would possess it. . . . At the basis of this lies a shortage of productivity, a shortage of grain, and this shortage of grain pushes us to the organisation of sovkhozy.[58]

Several other officials shared this type of interpretation of the grain crisis and the general problem of Soviet agriculture. The issue had already come up at the April 1928 plenum. Miliutin, head of the Central Statistical Administration, cited statistics showing that peasants had larger reserves in early 1928, during the application of extraordinary measures, than in the same period in 1927. But Iakovlev, head of the NK RKI, an agency charged with verifying the work of other government branches, argued that the regime in the countryside worked as if it were in a 'dark forest'. Despite Miliutin's statistics he insisted and presented evidence indicating that government agencies had very little reliable information about grain reserves in the villages. Following him, Kubiak, then RSFSR agriculture commissar, disputed Miliutin's claims for the harvest because in many regions the extraordinary measures procured grain from old reserves. He described Miliutin's figures as 'disproved by life', and he also anticipated Kalinin's argument that if there had been substantial reserves, the extraordinary measures would have found them.[59] Sokolnikov, vice-chairman of Gosplan, in a speech at the July 1928 plenum, argued that Soviet grain production was 5 per cent below the pre-war level (admitting that his statistics from TsSU were flawed and the number could be even lower), but the population was 10 per cent greater than before the war, and asked 'on what basis can we make ends meet?'[60]

Stalin's views on the causes of the crisis are contradictory. He did not object to Kubiak's statement or to Kalinin's statement at the plenums, and he agreed with Sokolnikov. In his speech 'On the Grain Front' in May 1928, Stalin made a rather inconsistent argument.[61] On the one hand, he cited data showing that overall grain production in the Soviet Union had reached pre-war levels. He also cited data showing that the government had procured during 1925–28 steadily more grain every year. Yet he also quoted the data prepared by Nemchinov showing that grain marketings had decreased relative to pre-war years, which seems incompatible with the evidence of increasing procurements. And he blamed the whole situation on the small-farm structure of Soviet agriculture, which did not allow for large market production.

Clearly many party leaders, including apparently Stalin, believed that the grain crisis was not simply or even primarily a problem of grain marketing and prices, but rather first of all one of production, that the country faced a shortage that reminded at least some of the crises in 1921 and 1924. It was this awareness, not only of the current situation but the memory of repeated crises in the past few years, that lay behind

not only the pressure on the kulak but also the efforts to obtain food from abroad and, most important, to undertake the transformation of agriculture.

The sovkhoz project

The first concrete policy step in the direction of collectivisation was the sovkhoz project; which Stalin proposed at a Politburo meeting on 23 April 1928, in response to the grain crisis. The proposal envisaged establishing a network of some dozens of large state farms mostly in what would later be called the 'virgin lands' of southern Siberia, northern Kazakhstan, and open areas in the Volga, North Caucasus, Ukraine, and a few other places where the sovkhozy would not impinge on peasant lands.[62] The sovkhozy were to be modelled on the large mechanised farm of Thomas D. Campbell, Jr. in Montana.

Stalin's statements about this project indicate better than most other sources his intentions in advocating collectivisation. He expressed his attitude in a speech published in incomplete form in his works, but new archival sources now allow us to place his statement in the context of the debate that took place at the plenum about his proposal. Kalinin presented the sovkhoz project to the July 1928 plenum. He stated that when Stalin proposed the project, the Politburo discussed it once and immediately approved it. This was an unusually rapid decision for such a large project – the allocation for the project of more than 300 million rubles substantially exceeded allocations for the Dneprostroi dam, for which discussions had been conducted for many years. In fact, Kalinin pointed out, the project had been discussed indirectly for some time as part of the problem of collectivisation and raising agricultural productivity, so that the Politburo was already psychologically prepared for it.[63] As we have seen, the leadership had already been discussing collective and state farms since at least 1925, had committed themselves to collectivisation in principle at the fifteenth Party Congress in December 1927, and Stalin had decided during January 1928 that socialist agriculture needed to be accelerated. Stalin, therefore, must have proposed the sovkhoz project as a kind of test project for collectivisation, and he and the other leaders, like Kalinin, saw the project as part of the process of collectivisation.

Kalinin defended the project on the basis of his argument that the country faced a shortage of grain, and that this programme would alleviate that shortage until more sovkhozy and kolkhozy could be built. Yet he conceived of the sovkhozy in this project as playing only a

contributory role in food supply: he said it would be 'absurd to shift the centre of weight of supply for the state to the sovkhozy', and that the main source of supply for the next five to six years would remain individual peasant farms until demand would become too large for them. Stalin interrupted Kalinin twice on these points to agree with him.[64] In this test project, therefore, the Soviet leadership attempted to organise large-scale socialist farming in a manner that would not coerce or even interfere with peasant farming, but would function as a supplement. They did not discuss what would happen after that five- to six-year period; they just seemed to hope that the socialist sector would grow fast enough to make up for the inevitable lag in peasant output.

Stalin expressed his views of the project in response to the intense debate that this proposal inspired. Antselovich, the head of the union of agricultural and timber workers and an advocate of sovkhozy, was very sceptical of the plan's emphasis on extensive farming in arid regions, and urged that investment instead be used for existing sovkhozy. Khataevich, party secretary of the Middle Volga region, also recommended this, in part because he anticipated delays and other problems in the project's implementation. The main critic, however, was Osinskii, a respected statistician and economist with wide experience in agricultural and food supply administration and at the time the head of the TsSU. Osinskii attacked the project as illiterate in agronomic terms, reasserting Antselovich's criticisms, and in economic terms. Osinskii described how, during a recent trip to the United States, he tried to find two famous 'bonanza' farms in the Midwest, those of Dalrymple and Amenia Sharon, and instead found that (according to him) both farms had disappeared because of soil exhaustion and economic considerations. He then criticised the Campbell farm, based on discussions with some local farmers; he admitted that he did not visit it. He said that 'Campbell, besides, is an advertiser or his enterprise is an advertising [reklamnyi] enterprise for showing tractors and agriculture machines of corresponding factories. He also acquires these cheaply. That's the situation with the wheat factory of Campbell.'[65] Osinskii thus dismissed it as a fraud and not a model of advanced farming. Instead he recommended as models certain intensive German farms connected to breweries and other enterprises, of the sort that the German Marxist Kautsky had described.

In response, Ivanov, a party leader in the North Caucasus, argued that Osinskii's report on the disappearance of the earlier large farms reflected capitalist conditions that would not apply in the Soviet case, and argued that the general economic consolidation from the new sovkhozy would

compensate for its higher cost. To this Rykov interjected: 'Correct.'[66] Muralov, vice-commissar of agriculture of the RSFSR, directly responded to Osinskii's criticism of extensive farming by citing Osinskii's own book on US agriculture, which documented that the large US farms had been growing grain continuously for decades, thereby discrediting Osinskii's criticism of extensive farming. Osinskii, he said, did not know his own book. Muralov also cited the leading Soviet agronomic specialist on drought, N. M. Tulaikov, who argued on the basis of experimental evidence that grain could be grown for seven years straight in the region before soil exhaustion concerns would become important.[67]

It was in this context that Stalin decided to participate in the discussion and respond to Osinskii. In his speech he defended the sovkhoz project and also the US model he was relying on. First he cited at length from the article by Tulaikov that described the Campbell farm, its enormous size of some 95,000 acres, complete mechanisation of production, and vast productivity. He then argued, like Ivanov had, that the capitalist conditions of private property and rent did not exist in the Soviet Union, so that under Soviet conditions large grain farms 'do not need at all for their development either maximum profit, or average profit, but can limit themselves to minimum profit (and sometimes manage without any profit), which along with the absence of absolute land rent creates exceptionally favourable conditions for the development of large grain farms'. Finally, he argued that new sovkhozy, along with the older ones and the kolkhozy, could serve as economic support points in the villages, which would allow increased grain supplies and thereby enable it to avoid the use of the extraordinary measures.[68]

Tulaikov, who was a much more knowledgeable and competent specialist on agriculture than Osinskii, was in fact correct in his report, and Osinskii's statements at the plenum about large US farms were seriously wrong.[69] There were many more large farms than the three he tried to find. The Amenia Sharon farm was in fact dissolved in the 1920s because of disputes among the owners, but it was well organised and profitable during its 42-year existence. The Dalrymple farm had temporarily been divided among other farmers during the First World War because of the profit offered by high land prices, but with the farm price collapse after the war many of the new owners returned their lands to the Dalrymple family. By the 1930s the farm again had 30,000 acres and was making a profit, and it was still operating in the 1970s.[70] As regards Campbell, while he certainly advertised his success, it was quite real. Thomas D. Campbell, Jr., was an extremely competent individual, who

earned a PhD in Engineering and a Law degree, operated a 4000-acre farm while in college, and overcame initial obstacles of drought, crop failure, and debt to turn his massive farm in the early 1920s into an enormous success based on exclusively mechanised grain production. In 1924 he produced a million-dollar wheat crop, and his farm continued to be large and productive well after his death in 1966. His farm was well known as the largest and most productive grain farm in the world; his work on it led several foreign countries in addition to the Soviet Union to invite him as a consultant on farm modernisation.[71]

Tulaikov, and thus Stalin, were right about Campbell in another sense: his highly mechanised, large-scale farming set a precedent followed by US farmers and those in many other countries. Whatever we may think about the environmental or economic effects of large farming, large-scale mechanised 'factory' farming became the model of modernity in agriculture, at least for grain and other crops and many forms of livestock production as well. The self-sufficient diverse farms idealised by Kautsky and later Osinskii were certainly important accomplishments for the nineteenth-century, but because they used limited mechanisation and because they were so self-sufficient, they did not fit into the increasingly specialised pattern of inputs, production, and processing that came to characterise the modern food system.[72]

The sovkhoz project had the goal within the next few years of producing 100 million puds (about 1.6 million tons) of marketed grain, using the most modern farming technology available at the time, and the new sovkhozy were not to impinge on peasant lands. The programme was in fact implemented in this way, under the new agency 'Zernotrest', and did produce approximately 200 million puds by the beginning of 1931, of which about 150 million puds were marketable grain and the rest were seed.[73] The Soviet Government even brought Campbell to the Soviet Union twice, in January 1929 to meet Stalin and advise Zernotrest, and in June 1930 to observe large sovkhozy in the North Caucasus and Ukraine; he acknowledged many of their difficulties but was impressed by the scale and modernising effort of the farms and their workers.[74]

Clearly, the regime's commitment to modernisation in the sovkhoz project was not fraudulent and its objective was not to extract grain from peasants without regard to increasing production. Stalin indicated this in emphasising that the sovkhozy would not need to make much if any profit initially; since these were state farms, he was saying that the regime would invest in them without initially expecting a significant return except food. The project thus did not aim to exploit the countryside, but to spend what the leadership thought was necessary in order

to create a modern agricultural infrastructure that would benefit the country in the long term. The sovkhoz project, therefore, has to be seen as purely developmental in orientation, and reflected the same kind of attitude toward agricultural investment that Nove identified in the Brezhnev years.[75]

The rationale for collective agriculture

The move from the sovkhoz project to the mass collectivisation of the Soviet peasants was an enormous step in policy but not in principle. Stalin's speech 'The Year of the Great Turn', of 3 November 1929, which was one of the main indicators of the decision to collectivise, restated all of the arguments that he and those who supported the sovkhoz project had been proposing for years, but applied them to the mass of the peasantry. In the speech, Stalin listed as a major accomplishment of the year the shift from small peasant farming to large-scale advanced collective agriculture, which he described in terms of Machine-Tractor Stations (MTS), kolkhozy, and the large-scale grain sovkhozy.[76] He thus interpreted the sovkhoz project as part, even the epitome, of the collectivisation process. Stalin then restated his argument that the socialist system was more amenable to large-scale farms because socialist farms would not need to pay rent, would receive state financing, and would not need to make a profit initially.[77] In his notorious speech of 27 December 1929, in which he announced the policy of the liquidation of the kulaks as a class, Stalin referred again to his arguments about the advantages of large-scale farms and explicitly stated that these same advantages applied to the new collective farms, both those with advanced machinery and even those which could only pool their old equipment, because even that allowed expansion of sowings.[78]

By connecting collectivisation to the sovkhoz project begun a year before, and by attributing to kolkhozy the same basic advantages of state farms, Stalin indicated that he and other leaders conceived of collectivisation as an area of developing infrastructure, a sector in which the state would invest for the long term rather than for immediate returns. Of course the leadership wanted increased marketed food output, but they expected it because sovkhozy and kolkhozy during NEP had had higher yields than peasants, and because collectivisation like the sovkhoz project would increase cropland and, in their view, guarantee much more food production. Stalin stated, however, that collectivisation, by increasing farm productivity and production, would enable the regime to eliminate the scissors between town and country, in other words

eliminate the 'something like tribute', the exploitation, which the leadership had uncomfortably acknowledged and disputed during NEP.[79]

These public statements obviously reflected some degree of exaggeration, but they also reflected Stalin's optimism based on several reports about collectivisation in certain model regions of 'wholesale' [sploshnoi] collectivisation. We will return to this optimism below, but first we should consider how party leaders saw collectivisation in the closed forum of the November 1929 plenum. For the discussion of the collectivisation project at the plenum actually reflected a diversity of views, with some speakers clearly more optimistic about collectivisation than others. Stalin in particular tried to tone down optimism at the plenum by emphasising that the kolkhoz was still not socialism, but only the beginning of the gradual transformation of the peasantry in the spirit of socialism.[80] Several speakers, like Kaminskii, the head of Kolkhoztsentr, who made the initial report on collectivisation, and Andreev, the North Caucasus party secretary, agreed with Stalin's claim that the middle peasant had 'turned toward' the kolkhoz, and cited evidence to support it. Kaminskii presented tables with data on kolkhoz crop sowings, Andreev reported 25–30 per cent collectivisation in the North Caucasus.[81] Klimenko, the head of Traktorotsentr, the agency in charge of the MTS system, had the most extreme and unrealistic expectations: 60 per cent increases in both yields and sowings, massive increases in fodder production because tractors would allow a drop in the number of horses and thereby free land for fodder for other animals, and plans to train 800,000 technicians for the MTS.[82]

On the other hand, speakers discussed most of the fundamental problems that would plague the collective farm system in the following years: labour organisation, remuneration and incentives, shortages of parts for equipment, peasants' opposition and resistance, and environmental disasters. Antselovich in particular discussed problems of kolkhozy obtaining a third or more of their labour by hiring batraks on terms worse than the kulaks offered, misappropriating investment funds to build houses, and concealing grain from procurements with false grain balances.[83]

In general, however, speakers did not emphasise or even discuss marketing and procurement issues. Kaminskii argued that kolkhozy would be market producers, not 'consumer farms', because they had higher yields and used more modern methods, that is, that collectivisation was development. He did not say that they were market producers because procurement brigades could take more from kolkhozy more easily than from individual peasants, that is, that they facilitated

exploitation, as advocates of the exploitation argument might assert. As noted above, Kalinin made a statement like that about the extraordinary measures. It would have been possible for Kaminskii to make an exploitation argument, but the evidence shows that he did not.[84]

The party leaders at the plenum thus focused on the kolkhoz system as a new and (at least to most of them) promising system of farm production, and addressed its problems in operation and management. Most of them shared to some degree the optimism about collectivisation that Stalin expressed in his Great Turn speech, but many of them also repeated his statement at the plenum that collectivisation would only begin the transformation of the peasantry. This was of course a substantial understatement, but it indicated that these leaders saw collectivisation as the beginning of arduous work, the crucial first step in a long process of technical and human transformation and modernisation. None of them expressed a sense of relief that 'now we will be able to extract what we want from those peasants without having to deal with them or worry about their farms'.

The reports that the mass of peasants had already 'turned toward the kolkhoz' were highly problematic because those results took place in a context of increasing coercion, which local personnel applied against 'kulaks' and also frequently used to induce peasants to join kolkhozy, and because these reports, along with many other factors, motivated local and regional officials to use coercion and violence in collectivisation. Most if not all officials knew this from numerous OGPU reports, but they also thought that the kolkhoz would be much better for the peasants than traditional farming, based on statements by peasants to this effect and evidence of expanded sowings, greater output, and reduced workloads. I believe that they calculated that only a limited amount of coercion would be necessary until the peasants understood the advantages of the kolkhoz. Yet the regime also supported collectivisation with substantial and increasing investments in agriculture. Table 6.1 presents published data which shows massive increases in Soviet budgetary expenditure on agriculture; these data are moreover understated because some industrial investment, like tractor factories, actually was used for agriculture. There are some disputes over the exact figures, and of course sometimes investment was not used as designated, but all other sources also indicate significant increases in Soviet agricultural spending, including investment, from the late 1920s, initially in both the peasant and socialised sectors, and then from 1930 much more in the socialised sector.[85]

Table 6.1 Soviet state budget expenditure on industry, agriculture, and total, 1928/29–1941 (million current rubles and per cent of total)

Investment sector	1928–29 amt.	%	1929–30 amt.	%	1930 Special Quarter amt.	%	1931 amt.	%	1932 amt.	%
Industry	1,248	14.2	2,624	19.7	1,030	20.4	8,117	32.4	13,300	35.0
Agriculture	714	8.1	1,353	10.1	614	12.2	2,914	11.6	3,944	10.3
Total	8,784	100	6,654	100	2,727	100	15,977	100	24,784	100
	1933		**1934**		**1935**		**1936**		**1937**	
Industry	13,701	24.7	13,687	24.7	16,332	22.2	14,929	16.1	16,743	15.8
Agriculture	4,134	9.8	6,409	11.6	7,682	10.4	9,158	9.9	9,506	8.9
Total	24,047	100	31,241	100	73,572	100	92,480	100	106,238	100
	1938		**1939**		**1940**		**1941**			
Industry	23,616.5	19.0	31,116	20.3	28,576	16.4	39,181	18.1		
Agriculture	11,409	9.2	13,334	8.7	12,204	7.0	13,455	6.3		
Total	124,039	100	153,299	100	174,350	100	216,052	100		

Source: R. W. Davies, *The Development of the Soviet Budgetary System* (Cambridge, 1958) p. 296. The 1930 special quarter refers to the last three months of 1930 after which the Soviet budgeting system shifted to a calendar year basis.

These figures again show that in collectivisation, just as in the sovkhoz project, the regime's aim was agricultural development, and not extraction at the expense of agriculture for the exclusive benefit of industry. These data also demonstrate that the statements by Stalin and other officials advocating the sovkhoz project and collectivisation in order to develop agriculture were not propaganda lies to conceal brutal exploitation, because they did not just talk about investment but actually allocated and spent increasing amounts of funds on agriculture. When Soviet officials thought of sovkhozy and kolkhozy and collectivisation, they did not think of exploiting the peasants but of the budget, of balancing priorities for investment.

Stalin's optimism (and of course not only his) about the project had a certain fanatical quality: with collectivisation it must have seemed to him that the Soviet government was actually solving at long last the old, cursed 'peasant question'. In his public statements and even at the plenum he clearly anticipated that the poor peasants, who in his view were oppressed by their kulak neighbours, would want to farm in a new, modern way, free of their former oppressors. He clearly had faith that the application of American technology and farm organisation would easily overcome any obstacles.

Of course, it did not quite work that way. Endless unanticipated problems and complications, not only in the farms but also in the industrial and trade sectors over which the agricultural personnel had no control, peasants' actions, which were not always resistance but which often had a disruptive effect, and natural disasters whose effects a modern farming system was supposed to mitigate, combined to disrupt the operation of the new system, especially in its first few years. The mild famine conditions of 1928–29 became extremely severe by 1932, when Stalin complained to the writer Sholokhov, with whom he engaged in a long correspondence about the difficulties of the kolkhoz near his home, that 'the esteemed peasants' in his farm and others were engaged in a strike that threatened to leave the workers without bread.[86] This famous quote, of course, was an over-reaction, because the famine of 1931–33 was not caused by a peasant strike. It does suggest, however, that by this time Stalin's enthusiasm for collectivisation, his patient attitude toward the peasants expressed in his earlier writings, and his hopes for their transformation had been somewhat weakened by disillusionment and been transformed in part into a sense of being in bitter, dogged combat with an opponent who would yield only to the strongest resistance and at great cost to the Soviet Union.[87]

Conclusion

Nonetheless, Stalin still consistently rejected the exploitation argument. In July 1934 he wrote a letter to the Politburo in which he criticised an article published by Bukharin earlier that year that reasserted the exploitation argument. Stalin wrote: 'One should not make even a remote allusion to the point that our heavy industry developed allegedly by means of some or partial devouring of light industry and agriculture. One should not, because this does not correspond to reality, [and] it smacks of slander and denigrates party policy.'[88] Some 15 years after this crisis, during the Second World War, Churchill asked Stalin about collectivisation, and in that famous but often ill-interpreted discussion Stalin indicated that his intentions were those of development:[89]

> 'Tell me,' I [Churchill] asked, 'have the stresses of this war been as bad to you personally as carrying through the policy of the Collective Farms?'
> This subject immediately aroused the Marshall.
> 'Oh, no,' he said, 'the Collective Farm policy was a terrible struggle.'
> 'I thought you would have found it bad,' said I, 'because you were not dealing with a few score thousands of aristocrats or big landowners, but with millions of small men.'
> 'Ten millions,' he said, holding up his hands. 'It was fearful. Four years it lasted. It was absolutely necessary for Russia, if we were to avoid periodic famines, to plough the land with tractors. We must mechanise our agriculture. When we gave tractors to the peasants they were all spoiled in a few months. Only Collective Farms with workshops could handle tractors. We took the greatest trouble to explain it to the peasants. It was no use arguing with them. After you have said all you can to a peasant he says he must go home and consult his wife, and he must consult his herder.' This last was a new expression to me in this connection.
> 'After he has talked it over with them he always answers that he does not want the Collective Farm and he would rather do without the tractors.'
> 'These were what you call Kulaks?'
> 'Yes,' he said, but he did not repeat the word. After a pause, 'It was all very bad and difficult – but necessary.'
> 'What happened?' I asked.
> 'Oh, well,' he said, 'many of them agreed to come in with us. Some of them were given land of their own to cultivate in the province of Tomsk or the province of Irkutsk or farther north, but the great bulk of them were very unpopular and were wiped out by their labourers.' There was a considerable pause. Then, 'Not only have we vastly increased the food supply, but we have improved the quality of the grain beyond all measure. All kinds of grain used to be grown. Now no one is allowed to sow any but the standard Soviet grain from one end of our country to the other. If they do they are severely dealt with. This means another large increase in the food supply.'

This is of course a highly problematic quotation. Stalin knew perfectly well what happened to the kulaks, and what he said was extremely incomplete and misleading; the statement about peasants consulting their wives might be an echo of the 'bab'e bunty' of early 1930. The conversation took place after midnight and so Churchill's memory when he wrote, and Stalin's memory and the translator's accuracy at the time, may all have suffered; the 'herders' whom the peasants consulted may have been an error of the translator or of Churchill's or Stalin's memory. Yet from this discussion we can see two characteristics of Stalin's views of agriculture that date back many years before. First, we see again Stalin's attempts to understand the peasants' viewpoint, in his homespun-style description of the peasant consulting his wife, being unwilling to have tractors, and so forth. His attitude here was much more negative than in his early articles, and what he said may have reflected a certain degree of disillusionment after the protests of early 1930 and the events of the famine, and perhaps this is the source of Khrushchev's comment cited at the beginning of this chapter. On the other hand, Stalin's statements in the discussion have a constant theme: the Soviet Union needed collective agriculture in order to mechanise so that the country could produce enough food and avoid repeated famines. And in this discussion Stalin said nothing about extracting grain from the countryside.[90] This would suggest that by this time Stalin no longer thought of agriculture as a source of 'something like tribute', but instead saw it as an integral and crucial part of the Soviet industrial economy.

Finally, interpreting collectivisation as development, in particular the extremely idealistic application of the most advanced American technology and methods to modernise backward Soviet Russia, makes more sense and is more compatible with the idealistic, utopian character of the rest of the five-year plan goals and ideals. Stalin's efforts to think beyond the immediate needs, his long-term conceptions of a socialist economy based on a socialist agriculture, his recognition of the potential of the US factory farm, and the process by which he moved the Soviet leadership

and the country toward collectivisation via the sovkhoz project, reflected both his intellectual strengths and limitations. The tragedy of collectivisation derived from the fact that in certain ways it was rational, because it employed modern technology and farming methods that had proven themselves in similar environmental conditions, and because it seemed clearly to have the potential to solve the country's most serious economic problem.

Notes

1 On this, see M. B. Tauger, *Natural Disaster and Human Action in the Soviet Famine of 1931–1933* (Pittsburgh: Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies, no. 1506, 2001); and R. W. Davies and S. G. Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger: Soviet Agriculture, 1931–1933* (New York, 2004).
2 For this moderately positive evaluation of Soviet agriculture, see for example *U.S. Agriculture in a Global Economy*; 1985 Yearbook of Agriculture (Washington, DC, 1985), pp. 100–6.
3 R. Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow* (Oxford, 1986), p. 20. Similar, even cruder, and even less supported descriptions of Stalin's views and policies are found in the recent biography by S. Sebag-Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York, 2004).
4 A. Erlich, 'Stalin's Views on Economic Development', in E. J. Simmons (ed.), *Continuity and Change in Russian and Soviet Thought* (Cambridge, MA., 1955); D. Volkogonov, *Stalin: Triumph and Tragedy* (New York, 1991), p. 170; D. Moon, *The Russian Peasant, 1600–1930* (London and New York, 1999), p. 358. See also L. Viola, *The Best Sons of the Fatherland* (Oxford, 1986), p. 25; S. Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 37–38.
5 Erlich, 'Stalin's views', p. 94.
6 Radzinsky even attributes Preobrazhenskii's views explicitly to Stalin without indicating that they originated with Preobrazhenskii and without giving any indication where he found these views in Stalin's writings or statements; E. Radzinskii, *Stalin* (New York, 1996), p. 235.
7 I. Arnon, *Modernization of Agriculture in Developing Countries: Resources, Potentials, and Problems* (New York, 1981), p. 451.
8 J. Millar, 'Mass Collectivization and the Contribution of Soviet Agriculture to the First Five-Year Plan', *Slavic Review*, 33 (1974), pp. 750–66; M. Ellman, 'Did the Agricultural Surplus Provide the Resources for the Increase in Investment in the USSR during the First Five Year Plan?', *Economic Journal* (December 1975).
9 M. Harrison, 'Why did NEP Fail?', *Economics of Planning*, 16(2) (1980), pp. 57–67.
10 E. H. Carr, 'Revolution from Above: Some Notes on the Decision to Collectivize Soviet Agriculture', in K. H. Wolff and B. Moore, Jr. (eds), *The Critical Spirit* (Boston, MA, 1967), esp. p. 323; M. Lewin, 'The Immediate Background of Soviet Collectivization', in M. Lewin, *The Making of the Soviet System* (New York, 1985), pp. 92–9; quoted at p. 91, see also pp. 99, 103.

11 J. D. Bergamini, 'Stalin and the Collective Farm', in Simmons (ed.), *Continuity and Change*, pp. 225–7.
12 I. Deutscher, *Stalin: A Political Biography* (Oxford, 1967), p. 322.
13 These include R. Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow; Investigation of the Ukrainian Famine*, (Washington, D.C., 1988); A. Graziosi, *The Great Soviet Peasant War* (Cambridge, 1995).
14 Conquest, for example, cites one sentence second-hand from a Ukrainian newspaper asserting that one aim of collectivisation in Ukraine was 'the destruction of Ukrainian nationalism's social base – the individual landholdings'. *Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 219. This kind of argument is very problematic because it is by no means clear that Ukrainian peasants, who were mostly illiterate, were nationalist, at least in the sense of the nationalism of educated society. It is also problematic because this argument is not advanced in any of the archival sources to be discussed below.
15 See, for example, M. B. Tauger, 'The 1932 Harvest and the Famine of 1933', *Slavic Review*, 50(1) (Spring 1991); and *Natural Disaster and Human Action* at http://www.as.wvu.edu/history/Faculty/Tauger/; and Davies and Wheatcroft, *The Years of Hunger*.
16 On this, see Tauger, 'Soviet Peasants and Collectivization: Resistance and Adaptation', *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 31(3–4) (April–July, 2004); and Davies and Wheatcroft, *Years of Hunger*, chs 6–7.
17 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 1, pp. 222–3.
18 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 3, pp. 34–5.
19 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 3, pp. 331–4.
20 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, pp. 45–8.
21 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, pp. 135.
22 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, pp. 243–4.
23 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 6, pp. 316–17.
24 The Kronstadt revolt of early 1921 was an anti-Communist rebellion of sailors, mostly of peasant origin, on a Soviet island naval base in the Baltic. The Antonov rebellion took place at the same time in Tambov province in central Russia.
25 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 7, pp. 19–33, vol. 8, pp. 91–4.
26 The research of Chaianov's organisation-production school, with the evidence it exposed of cyclic social mobility among the peasantry, makes it extremely difficult to accept the existence of any classes in the urban sense among the peasantry; see T. Shanin, *The Awkward Class* (Oxford, 1972); and A. V. Chayanov, *The Theory of Peasant Economy* (Madison, 1986).
27 In 1925 he stated with little exaggeration that 99 out of 100 Communists were ready to strip the kulak; Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 7, p. 337.
28 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, p. 461.
29 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 12, pp. 167–9. Lewin, among others, interpreted dekulakisation as a purely political decision, asserting that regime policies toward the kulaks reflected hesitation due to official uncertainty about 'the real social character of the kulak'; M. Lewin, 'Who was the Soviet Kulak?', in Lewin, *Making of the Soviet System*, p. 138. It seems clear from this plenum and other sources that Stalin, Kalinin, and most other leaders had no uncertainty about the kulaks' social character, and were just waiting for socialist agricultural enterprises to free them from dependence on the kulaks.

30 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 5, pp. 152–3; T. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire* (Ithaca, NY, 2001), pp. 395–6.
31 See his messages to Lenin from the Tsaritsyn area dealing with food supply in 1919: *Sochineniia*, vol. 4, pp. 116–21, 217–20, 425. For examples of Politburo decisions on the famine on which Stalin voted, see *'Antonovshchina:' Krest'ainskoe vosstanie v Tambovskoi gubernii v 1919–1921 gg.* (Tambov, 1994), pp. 109, 133.
32 No Western study examines this famine in any detail; E. H. Carr discusses it briefly in *Socialism in One Country* (New York, 1958), vol. 1, ch. 1. See also I. A. Poliakov, 'Nedorod 1924 g. I bor'ba s ego posledstviiami', *Istoriia* SSSR, (1) (1958), pp. 52–82; and the contemporary collection of articles: A. I. Rykov (ed.), *V bor'be s zasukhoi igolodom* (Moscow, 1925).
33 *Bednota* ran the article twice, on 25 and 26 July 1924. This article was not included in Stalin's published works.
34 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 7, p. 313.
35 Stalin's emphasis on panic-mongering was not simply a typical attack on the usual class enemies. The 1924 crop failure and famine had quite serious effects on peasants who had endured the extreme trauma of the 1920 and 1921 crop failures very recently, often had not fully recovered, and expected the worst again. The *New York Times* in September 1924 summarised a secret German diplomatic report they had obtained on the crisis, which asserted that 'Russia faces the worst famine in her history', described mass peasant flight from their homes, livestock deaths, cannibalism, and anticipated millions of deaths. *New York Times*, 7 Sept. 1924, 3. Although there were some deaths from the famine, this latter fear did not materialise, as the regime imported food and set up effective relief measures, which Stalin outlined in the article discussed.
36 See Rykov (ed.), *V bor'be s zasukhoi*, pp. 5–6.
37 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 7, pp. 315–16.
38 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 8, pp. 117–19.
39 L. T. Lih, O. V. Naumov and O. V. Khlevniuk (eds), *Stalin's Letters to Molotov, 1925–1936* (New Haven, CT, 1995), pp. 86–7, letter of 20 July 1925.
40 Lewin, 'Immediate Background', pp. 94–7 and *passim*.
41 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 8, pp. 120–29.
42 Millar, 'A Debate on Collectivization', in Ward, *Stalinist Dictatorship*, pp. 146–7.
43 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, p. 354.
44 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, p. 513.
45 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 4. p. 607.
46 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 4, p. 154, for the dispute at the TsK plenum.
47 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 4, pp. 661–2.
48 On higher productivity, see the documents in *Koooperativno-kolkhoznoe stroitel'stvo v SSSR 1923–27* (Moscow, 1991), especially the mid-1926 report by the agriculture cooperative council documenting much higher yields in collective farms, pp. 173–88; more generally, E. H. Carr and R. W. Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, pt. 1, vol. 1 (New York, 1969), ch. 6, especially pp. 158–60.

49 P. N. Sharova (ed.), *Kollektivizatsiia sel'skogo khoziaistva: Vazhneishie postanovleniia Kommunisticheskoi partii i Sovetskogopravitel'stva 1927–1935* (Moscow, 1957); Stalin, *Works*, vol. 10, pp. 310–13.
50 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 11, pp. 1–4; *Political Archives of Russia* (Nova Science Publishers, Commack, New Jersey), 2(4) (1991), pp. 213–24.
51 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 11, pp. 4–9.
52 Lewin, 'Immediate Background', pp. 98–9.
53 These components were openly discussed and published at the time, and such published sources served as the basis for subsequent scholarly discussions, such as R. W. Davies, *The Socialist Offensive* (Cambridge, 1980), pp. 39–41; M. Lewin, *Russian Peasants and Soviet Power* (New York, 1975), ch. 9; and the studies discussed at the beginning of this chapter.
54 The following derives from Tauger, *Statistical Falsification in the Soviet Union*, Donald Treadgold Papers (Seattle, 2001).
55 J. E. Welker, *Climate and the Soviet Grain Crisis of 1928* (Dissertation, University of Maryland, 1995), pp. 41–2.
56 M. Reiman, *The Birth of Stalinism* (Bloomington, 1987), pp. 47–8.
57 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 3, pp. 38–9.
58 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, p. 460, emphases in the original.
59 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 1, pp. 71–9.
60 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 266–7.
61 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 11, pp. 81–7.
62 I. E. Zelenin, 'Pervaia sovetskaia programma massovogo osvoeniia tselinnykh zemel', *Otechestvennaia istoriia*, (2) (1996), pp. 55–70; M. L. Bogdenko, *Stroitel'stvo zernovykh sovkhozov v 1928–1932* gg. (Moscow, 1958); Carr and Davies, *Foundations of a Planned Economy*, ch. 7.
63 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 453–4.
64 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 462–5.
65 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 471–6, 481–4.
66 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, p. 487. Zelenin, 'Pervaia sovetskaia programma', 61, misinterprets Ivanov's statements as critical of Stalin's proposal and supportive of Osinskii, which they were not.
67 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 503–4.
68 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 2, pp. 514–16.
69 Russian scholars who have written about this dispute – Zelenin in his 1996 article, 'Pervaia sovetskaia programma', and Danilov, Vatlin, and Khlevniuk in their introduction to the transcript of the April 1928 plenum – misrepresent it, in particular in relation to the Campbell farm. Zelenin asserts that Tulaikov's description, which Stalin quoted, referred to an earlier phase of the Campbell farm's operations and that it no longer worked as well, which was quite incorrect, and both Danilov and Zelenin accept Osinskii's dismissive and invalid description of the farm as 'advertising'. Zelenin, 'Pervaia sovetskaia programma', pp. 60–2; *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. pp. 2, 20.
70 On these points, see the classic study of US large-scale farming, H. Drache, *Beyond the Furrow* (Danville, 1976), ch. V.
71 On Campbell, see H. Drache, 'Thomas D. Campbell – The Plower of the Plains,' *Agricultural History*, 51(1) (January 1977), pp. 78–91; *New York Times*, 19 Mar. 1966, 29; Biography, T. D. Campbell Papers, 1874–1984, Online Archive of New Mexico, http://elibrary.unm.edu/oanm/NmU/nmu1%23mss566bc/.

Campbell's success as a farmer caught the attention of General George C. Marshall of the US army, who recruited him as his direct subordinate during the Second World War. Campbell was ultimately promoted to Brigadier General for his work in logistics and military planning in the African and Asian theatres.

72 On this, see G. Tansey and T. Worsley, *The Food System: A Guide* (London, 1995), ch. 5; D. Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory* (New Haven, CT, 2003); J. Scott, *Seeing Like A State* (New Haven, CT, 1998) unjustifiably minimizes the significance of large-scale farming; see my review at hnet.org, under reviews.

73 RGASPI 17.3.809, l. 23, report by Zernotrest to the Politburo, 7 Jan. 1931.

74 See his description of his trips in T. D. Campbell, *Russia: Market or Menace?* (London, 1932).

75 See A. Nove, *Soviet Agriculture: The Brezhnev Legacy and Gorbachev's Cure* (Santa Monica, 1988).

76 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 12, pp. 124–5.

77 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 12, pp. 129–30.

78 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 12, pp. 154–7.

79 Stalin, *Sochineniia*, vol. 12, pp. 160.

80 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, p. 579.

81 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, pp. 277–9, 332.

82 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, pp. 309–12.

83 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, pp. 326–31.

84 *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, pp. 289–90.

85 R. W. Davies, J. M. Cooper and M. J. Ilič, *Soviet Official Statistics on Industrial Production, Capital Stock and Capital Investment, 1928–41*. SIPS Occasional Paper No. 1, CREES, (Birmingham, 1991).

86 Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 232.

87 See Tauger, 'Soviet Peasants and Collectivization'.

88 V. Danilov, R. Manning and L. Viola (eds), *Tragediia Sovietskoi derevni* vol. 4 (Moscow, 2002), pp. 200–1.

89 W. S. Churchill, *The Second World War v. 4: The Hinge of Fate* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 498–9.

90 Some scholars have argued that Soviet leaders employed collectivisation at least in part as an attack on Ukrainian nationalism. Their evidence for this is one sentence taken out of context from a Ukrainian newspaper in January 1930; see Conquest, *Harvest of Sorrow*, p. 219. Yet in the two years of discussions recorded in the newly published *TsK* plenums none of the speakers suggested anything remotely indicating that they wanted collectivisation to destroy Ukrainian nationalism. The only discussion related to these issues is Kosior's presentation on Ukrainian agriculture at the November 1929 plenum, in which he connects Ukraine's success in dealing with the 1928–29 natural disasters to Ukraine's success in solving the nationality problem, which at that point could only have meant the policy of indigenisation and promotion of Ukrainian nationalism, not the later attacks on Ukrainian nationalism. *Kak lomali NEP*, vol. 5, p. 388.

7

Brown Bread for Victory: German and British Wholemeal Politics in the Inter-War Period

Uwe Spiekermann

Bread is more than a foodstuff: it is a symbol of life. Its cultural status not only includes the Christian promise of brotherhood and equality of mankind, but bread consumption also marks crucial differences between individuals, social groups, and nations. This chapter will analyse a short but important episode in the history of consumption. During the two world wars bread was still the most important foodstuff in the European diet. It was a decisive resource in conflict and for victory. While the First World War was a testing field both for strategists and nutritionists, intensified research and cultural anxieties moved bread to the top of the social and political agenda of the Second World War.[1] The type of bread and the efficiency of bread policy were understood to be central for individual health, social efficiency, and national strength. This chapter will concentrate on wholemeal bread policy and compare the efforts of the main European powers, Germany and Great Britain, in the inter-war period.

Brown bread between alternative movement and nutritional science, 1900–1940

Today, wholemeal bread is often seen as a traditional food, typical of a coarse but nourishing peasant diet. This view may be right for some types of brown bread, but it is wrong for wholemeal bread. The term 'wholemeal' or 'Vollkorn' cannot be found in the German language before the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries. The first use can be dated at around 1910.[2] The syllable 'whole' resulted not only from the basic idea of using the whole grain for bread. It was an expression, too, recording the loss of traditional dishes during industrialisation and commercial bread production. While a growing number ate white bread,